



**HUMANE SOCIETY
INTERNATIONAL**
AUSTRALIA

Humane Society International Ltd
ABN 63 510 927 032

PO Box 439, Avalon NSW 2107, Australia
Telephone +61 2 9973 1728
Facsimile +61 2 9973 1729
Email admin@hsi.org.au

www.hsi.org.au

31 January 2023

Treasury
Langton Cres
Parkes ACT 2600

By email: MeasuringWhatMatters@Treasury.gov.au

Dear Treasury

Re: Measuring What Matters

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission in relation to the government's work towards developing a Measuring What Matters budget. Humane Society International (HSI) is the world's largest conservation and animal welfare organisation with over 10 million supporters globally. We have more than 25 years' experience in Australia, working to achieve an ecologically sustainable and humane world for animals. We support the implementation of a Measuring What Matters budget and raise the following matters for consideration.

HSI strongly supports the move towards developing a wellbeing budget, particularly in relation to better measuring the cost of our environmental impacts. In Australia, the cost of climate change is already running into the billions, and the fact that Australia leads the world in mammal extinctions doesn't show up anywhere in our annual budget figures. We welcome the decision to develop a wellbeing budget that provides an opportunity to integrate the value of a healthy environment into more traditional economic considerations.

This submission is limited to considering measures that would allow Australia to properly account for our impact on the environment and animal welfare, and recognise the strong dependency that Australia has on a healthy environment and animal well-being. We acknowledge the Treasury's recognition that indicators should be relevant, complete, measurable, comparable, reliable and understandable. We also welcome the recognition that as a country that is heavily dependent on the environment, appropriately incorporating environmental factors into a wellbeing budget will require Australia to go further than the high level measures currently used and recommended by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), namely exposure to outdoor air pollution; greenhouse gas emissions; material footprint; Red List Index of threatened species; and access to green space.

We note Treasury's comments that our current State of the Environment reporting is an important starting point for consideration of the environment in Measuring What Matters. It



must be acknowledged that the State of the Environment Report itself identifies that there are many measures where we currently have insufficient information to fully understand the status of environmental health. Nonetheless, we agree that the data generated as part of the State of the Environment reporting process will be an important underpinning for Measuring What Matters. We see a key role for the proposed Environment Protection Agency in coordinating the data necessary for Measuring What Matters and recommend that the new agency be adequately resourced to fulfil this role.

The Treasury discussion of Measuring What Matters for the Environment refers to a number of other jurisdictions that have incorporated environmental measures into a wellbeing budget. These jurisdictions provide a list of indicators that would be useful in the Australian context, including extent and condition of protected nature sites; energy from renewable sources; climate change adaptation; natural disasters and emergencies; waste generated and recycling rates; sustainability of fish stocks; access to public transport; walkable communities; noise pollution; drinking water quality; water quality in rivers; country-specific threatened index (such as the Australian threatened species index); and health of marine and coastal ecosystems.

In addition to the above factors, HSI considers that it would be relevant to consider indicators relating to whether protected areas are comprehensive, adequate and representative; climate change induced temperature increase on land and in the oceans; levels of ocean acidification; sea level rise; levels of soil carbon; adequacy of environmental water; vegetation clearance rates; investment in threatened species recovery and threat abatement; number of introduced species; measures of sustainable farming activity; implementation of appropriate animal welfare requirements; management of risks such as antimicrobial resistance and the emergence of zoonotic diseases as a consequence of animal management techniques; changes to soil and ocean chemistry; and urban heat levels.

Much of this information is already considered through the current State of the Environment reporting and would benefit from the development of a Measuring What Matters indicator. New measures relating to animal welfare will be important given the important role of animals in our economy and society and the emerging risks from industrial farming related to antimicrobial resistance and the emergence of zoonotic diseases.

HSI looks forward to further developments in relation to Measuring What Matters and requests that we be included in any further consultation on this issue. To discuss this submission further, please contact Megan Kessler, Nature Campaigner on ph: 1800 333 737 or email: mkessler@hsi.org.au.

Yours sincerely,

Megan Kessler

Dr Megan Kessler
Nature Campaigner